

APR 27 1932

Strains of Harmony by Paul Y. Anderson

# The Nation

Vol. CXXXIV, No. 3486

Founded 1865

Wednesday, April 27, 1932

## Franklin D. Roosevelt



## Perched on the Bandwagon

by Henry F. Pringle

## Toward a New Tax Program

by Edwin R. A. Seligman

## The Truth About Milne—*a review* by Joseph Wood Krutch

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**NO STARVATION?** We have been told by the governors of most of the States that there is none in this country today. In the February issue of *Better Times*, a monthly magazine published by the Welfare Council of New York City, Dr. Louis I. Dublin of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company wrote that "there is no evidence at all that anybody in these United States is starving." *Better Times* decided to investigate for itself. It sent Eleanor Flexner to inquire at the larger hospitals of New York City. She found, as she writes in the current issue of the magazine, the following number of "cases of starvation recorded by New York City hospitals during the year 1931: Bellevue, 59, of which 8 died; Kings County, 33, of which 12 died; Harlem, 2, and Gouverneur, 1." The proportion of deaths, Miss Flexner continues, "is irrelevant, for a starvation case is more likely to be suffering from an infection of some kind at the same time. If the starving person dies, death may be credited to pneumonia or some other disease, but none the less starvation is the primary cause." And, Miss Flexner pointed out, "this is wholly aside from that much more serious by-product of the depression—malnutrition."

**IT WOULD BE FOOLHARDY** to make any hard and fast prediction at this early date of the outcome of the Presidential election in November. Yet the steadily increasing registration of Democrats in the preferential primaries clearly shows which way the tide is running. Six weeks ago more than 80,000 Democratic votes were cast in North Dakota as against a previous maximum for that party of

13,000. New Hampshire, according to the *New York Times*, rolled up what was "apparently the heaviest Democratic vote ever cast in a Presidential primary." A similar report came from Nebraska, where extra Democratic ballot sheets had to be printed before the polls closed. In Illinois the Republicans lost 350,000 votes, while the Democrats added approximately 500,000, compared with the 1928 primary. In Wisconsin the Democrats turned out the greatest vote in their history, exceeding by 75,000 their 1928 showing—to the detriment of the La Follette Progressives, who lost many thousands of followers to the opposition party. Registrations in other States show a like trend. For example, the number of Democratic voters registered in California increased by 388,739; at the same time Republican registration dropped 237,493. Admittedly in some of these normally Republican States the Democratic vote or registration is still behind that of the Republicans. But the unprecedented gains the Democrats have been making have surely not comforted the Hoover organization.

**M**R. HOOVER met the proposal for an 11 per cent pay cut for federal employees, allowing an exemption of \$1,000 before the cut was computed, with a proposal of his own. This involves a compulsory furlough without pay for all government officials receiving more than \$1,350 per year. Examining the relative reductions in compensation under the two systems, we perceive the following results: Under the 11 per cent plan, an income of \$1,350 is cut 3 per cent, an income of \$1,850 is cut 5 per cent, an income of \$4,050 is cut 8 per cent, an income of \$7,250 is cut 9 per cent, and an income of \$10,500 is cut substantially 10 per cent. What of Mr. Hoover's plan? It provides for a cut in the income of \$1,350 of 9 per cent, and roughly for a cut of 8 per cent each in incomes of \$1,850, \$4,050, \$7,250, and \$10,500. Mr. Hoover, therefore, with what we now think of as characteristic perspicacity, has decided that it is better for the man or woman of lowest income to sacrifice the largest part of his stipend to the common good. It is interesting, also, in computing these figures, to note that there are, in the \$1,350 class, 20,243 employees; in the \$1,850 class, 35,690; and in the other three classes put together a total of 1,956. The President has indeed an eye for figures. If he seems to overlook certain human elements involved, perhaps we can lay that to his training in the impersonal profession of engineering.

**A**LFRED E. SMITH still has the courage of his convictions good or bad; he is not afraid to speak out vigorously on any of the questions of the day; in this respect he outshines Franklin D. Roosevelt and other active and receptive candidates for the Presidency—all this is what we are being told by the daily press as a result of Smith's address at the Jefferson Day dinner in Washington. There is no question that Smith spoke with great vigor in addressing his fellow-leaders in the Democratic Party. But we cannot agree that his speech, except in one particular, was either clear or especially pertinent. For example, his attack on

Governor Roosevelt was conducted entirely by indirection. And it was in fact as much a bid for the applause and support of a class—in his case big business and finance—as Roosevelt's own speech of the week before had been a bid for the support of the masses. True, the comparison here largely favors Smith. He has come out more openly, making no bones about his alliance with the Raskob crowd, the tory element in the Democratic Party, while Roosevelt continues to deal in glittering but, for the most part, meaningless generalities. We know where Smith stands; we cannot be so sure of Roosevelt. Certainly no one need in this crisis be as vague and empty as was Roosevelt in promising to help the farmers, the small merchants, and the millions of unemployed men and women.

**T**HE FORMER GOVERNOR sees intergovernmental debts and the Smoot-Hawley tariff as chiefly responsible for our economic impasse. What has he to offer by way of solution? Nothing with regard to the tariff but a restatement of his 1928 position, when, as all of us remember, he discarded the historic tariff-for-revenue-only policy of his party in favor of a "scientific" tariff. He still holds the fundamental purpose of the tariff to be "the preservation of the high standard of the American workingman," which in itself is a complete acceptance of the stand-pat protectionist position. But if high tariffs impede trade, as Smith correctly asserted, why not declare for lower tariffs, or for the abolition of the tariff system? If a "scientific" tariff is to turn the trick, why not tell us just how this is to be done? With respect to war debts Smith stands on firmer ground. Here was the one bright spot in his address. Stripped of its thin camouflage, Smith's proposal constituted a direct appeal for cancellation. His plan to have the United States write off a portion of the debts each year in return for trade would merely require a bit of extra bookkeeping. Under normal circumstances Europe buys enough goods from us to insure the wiping out of the debts in the twenty years specified by Smith. That it took courage for a political leader to come out thus openly for cancellation may be seen from the comments of various Congressmen on the Smith plan. Almost to a man they denounced it, and declared they were still opposed to cancellation or further moratoriums. However he may have hedged on other points in his address, Al Smith is to be commended for speaking out on debts.

**W**E HESITATE TO BELIEVE, despite all the alarming signs to the contrary, that the maneuvers of Japan and Russia in Manchuria and Siberia will actually lead to war. Certainly Soviet Russia does not want to fight anyone just now. Moscow has its hands full with its industrialization program. Again, it should be obvious to the Japanese that they have little to gain and a great deal to lose if they, through design or recklessness, open hostilities. The Japanese must know that the Russians have taken advantage of the period since September 18, when the invasion of Manchuria began, to prepare themselves for any eventuality in the Far East. Nevertheless, Tokio continues to pour troops into Korea and Manchuria, continues to issue pronouncements through its anonymous Foreign Office spokesman which must be irritating to the Kremlin. The Russians, given new courage by the knowledge that they have now a good-sized army and extensive military stores

in the Siberian maritime provinces, are speaking more plainly than ever through their newspapers. While the Moscow press is not courting war, it is telling the world that it is no longer afraid of a Japanese attack. In short, the Far Eastern situation is now more delicate than it has been at any time in the last seven months.

**T**HE GERMAN GOVERNMENT has suppressed the Brown Shirt army of the National Socialist Party. That the action was necessary cannot be denied. The Hitler army was a sworn opponent of the present German republic. It seems incredible that an independent state should have allowed this hostile military organization of 400,000 men to continue to exist as long as it did. The *London Times*, in commending the Brüning Government for its "courageous decision," asked whether the action had not been taken too late. It feared that Hitlerism had now grown so strong that the military arm of the movement could not be suppressed without serious disorders. However, the disbanding of the Nazi army has been proceeding peacefully, little real interference being offered by the Hitlerites. Adolf Hitler himself has to all appearances, though with suspicious calm, acquiesced in the order of the government. He doubtless knows that similar organizations have been suppressed in Germany since the war, that is, driven underground, only to thrive there. Hitler also knows that if the Nazis win in the Prussian elections they will control the Prussian police, and that can mean only that the Brown Shirt organization will be restored to good standing. But if the National Socialists fail in the elections? Then perhaps the fears of the *London Times* will be realized.

**T**HE RELIANCE OF THE COURTS upon psychology has been demonstrated by Judge Arthur L. Wilder of Rochester, New York. When three girls, one of them a high-school student, distributed handbills announcing an anti-war meeting to protest against militaristic displays on Army Day, they exposed their mentalities to the suspicions of the Power City's judge. These young women had violated a city ordinance which forbids the distribution of advertising matter without a license—although competent observers have stated that the ordinance, when it comes to commercial advertising, has been a dead letter. But they were also against war, and were members of the United Front Youth Anti-War Committee, affiliated with the Communist Party. They even spread pacific protests directly in front of the local armory, thus contaminating our defenders with so insidious a thought as the possibility of opposing war. No one of such balance as Judge Wilder, who is not only a patriotic citizen of the first water but Republican boss of the important nineteenth ward, could fail in his country's hour of peril. The girls were convicted, held without bail and incomunicado, and ordered to undergo a thorough pathological and psychiatric examination. Unfortunately for the safety of the Republic, the attorney for the young prisoners secured their release on a writ of habeas corpus, and their case will be appealed.

**T**HERE ARE RUMORS AFLOAT that Columbia University intends to reinstate Reed Harris, the expelled editor of the *Spectator*. So far, however, no indication of any such intention has come from official source

although there have been several signs which imply that the authorities realize their mistake and are anxious to put themselves in as good a light as possible. In the first place, Dean Hawkes himself seconded the nomination for Phi Beta Kappa of Rob Hall, the leader of the student rebels. In the second place, the university has appointed a committee to investigate the charges against the dining-room, which were the ostensible cause of Mr. Harris's expulsion, and it has named the same Mr. Hall to be one of the members of the committee. This, of course, is highly desirable even though a little late. Why did the authorities not investigate before they took the drastic step of expelling the man whose allegations are now to be officially recognized? We can, indeed, think of only one excuse: they must have been influenced by the superb exhibition of the works of Lewis Carroll which has just been held at the university. Someone must have taken seriously the principle of jurisprudence laid down by the Queen of Hearts: "Sentence first—verdict afterwards."

**MONTANA IS NOTED CHIEFLY** for its high mountains and low politics. Within its borders a free newspaper is as exotic as a rubber plant—and even with great care seldom survives as long. The "kept" press is all the more vicious in its effects because its ownership is technically hidden. Subsidies are called loans, and the labels, "Independent," "Democratic," and "Republican," are carefully displayed. It is not uncommon either to find ringing liberal sentiments on the editorial pages of the company press—and perhaps not everyone notices that these sentiments are concerned with questions outside of Montana. The trail of honest journalism in that beautiful land is marked by the bones of newspapers that thought liberalism should begin at home. But the trail does persist. The *Western Progressive*, a Helena weekly, is the latest addition to that small group of papers which manage to remain alive and free. The fight of the *Western Progressive* is the same old fight—against the Anaconda and Montana Power companies, which are the same opponent. The immediate objective is to elect enough free members of the State legislature to force the companies to pay their just share of taxes; and the same old problems are to be met—of taxpayers' associations controlled by company agents, of legislators in both parties doing the bidding of their real masters. But we hope that the *Western Progressive* and its comrade papers will persist.

**WE ARE HEARTILY IN FAVOR** of the proposal made by 500 "impoverished Greenwich Village artists" (was there ever any other kind?) to be allowed space in Washington Square for an open-air market for their paintings. The Park Commissioner, Walter R. Herrick, however, refused the request, citing the city charter which declares: "It shall not be lawful to grant use or occupy for purposes of a public fair or exhibition any portion of any park, square, or public place." This, to put it very politely, seems to us just nonsense. Did Mr. Herrick ever see the circus—tents, carousel, popcorn stands and all—which occupied the empty lots on Sixth Avenue after it had been widened to the noble thoroughfare it now is? Did he ever stroll along Second Avenue, or Delancey or Bleecker Streets, and observe the push carts, displaying not only articles of clothing and household use, not only pretzels, dill pickles,

and *gefüllte Fisch*, but lampshades, table covers, statuary, and other works of art? Why discriminate against the Greenwich Village artists, therefore, to whom a painting is just another piece of merchandise, no different really from a pretzel or a pair of socks? An open-air "art mart"—as the headline writers have doubtless already called it—would be another pleasant variation in a city noted for its variety.

**THE FEDERAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU** is celebrating its twentieth birthday, and with the bureau as well established and fully accepted a feature of our governmental structure as it has in that time become, it is hard to believe with what misgivings it was started. Objections to the bureau were originally on the ground that the investigation which its activities necessitated would carry bureau workers into the homes of American citizens, to pry unwarrantably into the details of their family life. That complaint has long since been forgotten in the excellences of the bureau's work. First under Julia C. Lathrop, then—and until the present—under the guidance of Grace Abbott, who has now served for eleven years, the activities of the department have steadily enlarged and grown in importance. It has sought to improve the standards of maternal and child hygiene, it has made a study of child labor, and has lately been asked by the Attorney General for help in the treatment of juvenile offenders. It is unfortunate to add that in a time of depression the Senate Appropriations Committee has recommended a 25 per cent cut in the bureau's appropriation, at a time when plans have been made for enlarging rather than cutting down on its work. This seems to be one of the places where economy is most unwise. The hundred thousand dollars that would be saved might very well be obtained elsewhere; a Veterans' Bureau budget which totals more than ten thousand times that might spare it far more easily.

**FEW WOMEN** have given so much of their time and of themselves to the cause of humanity as did Julia Clifford Lathrop, who died April 15 in Rockford, Illinois, her native city. All of her life—she was seventy-four when she died—Miss Lathrop was deeply, actively interested in social work and most particularly in child welfare. In 1893 she was appointed to the Illinois State Board of Charities, which began her official career, though she had devoted several years to social-service work before that. In 1901 she was reappointed to the charities board, a position she held until 1909. Three years later President Taft selected her to be the director of the newly formed Children's Bureau in Washington, and there she served until 1921. Through most of this period she was a voluntary resident of the Hull House Settlement in Chicago, filling in frequently during the absences of Jane Addams, with whom she worked in closest cooperation, as acting head resident of Hull House. This gives but a brief glimpse of Miss Lathrop's long and useful career. Her extraordinary work was recognized and honored as much abroad as at home. In 1925 she was elected assessor of the Child Welfare Committee of the League of Nations. Her many writings on child labor and child education commanded world-wide attention. A decade ago the National League of Women Voters named her one of "the twelve greatest living American women." When she died Miss Addams said she had been "one of the most useful women in the whole country."

## Wanted: Leadership

**T**HAT is the crying need the world over, but nowhere more so than in the city of Washington. No one can look over the political scene in the national capital and not be impressed with the fact that there is not a single outstanding figure. It is ridiculous for the Administration and for the financiers all over the country to berate Congress for economic ignorance or unwise legislation, for there is no more leadership in the Administration or among the financiers than there is in Congress. Men like Senator Borah, who have bulked rather large, are, if anything, shrinking under present conditions. A man like Congressman La Guardia may do a good job on occasion, but the truth is that neither he nor anyone else in Washington today knows where we are going, or has any idea where we should go, or what lies in store for us. If the Soviet newspapers have correspondents in Washington they are finding material in plenty in the headlessness and heedlessness of the procedure about them to illustrate, if not to prove, their favorite thesis that the capitalistic system is on the rocks. If it were not so tragic it would be amusing to watch the petty maneuvering that is going on at both ends of the capital in the effort to win whatever credit there may be for such stop-gap measures as are being put through. Never before has the weakness of the Progressives stood out more clearly. They cannot cut themselves loose from tariff humbug and corruption; they have no well-thought-out economic philosophy or political or economic program; no more than anyone else do they know whither we are going. We are reaping now the evil results of the committee and longevity system of the House, and we are seeing as never before how the industrialization of American life has flattened out individuality, independence, and aggressive leadership among both the conservatives and the liberals.

We are well aware that we have said all of this before, but we shall repeat it just as long as these conditions persist, for here is where the real menace of the situation lies. Go to Washington today and you will find the politicians, and many representatives of the press, utterly despondent, deep in gloom, and foreseeing the complete breakdown of our government within a year. Yet many of these same politicians have for years scoffed at the idea that there should be a new party with new ideas and a liberal or radical program, calling forth a new leadership, drawing new groups into our political life. In Germany Herr Hitler declares that the best service he has rendered is to bring some 30,000 or 40,000 men into the political arena, and to train them in subordinate positions for future leadership. And despite the fact that these leaders are being stuffed with impossible political and governmental doctrines, are being taught to hate and to threaten murder, and are being steeped in the long-since-outworn theories that brought about the collapse of Germany, we wonder whether that situation is really more dangerous for Germany than the total absence of program and leadership in either of the major parties is for the United States.

The truth is that in Washington today both parties are legislating in a blue funk. They know that the economic

situation is getting steadily worse, that unemployment is increasing and not decreasing, that while the measures which partly in response to Mr. Hoover's suggestion, have been passed by Congress have prevented a grave disaster in the financial world, they are seeking to balance the budget in a condition that borders on hysteria. Secretary Mills says one thing one day and another the next; he is for taxing large incomes in November, and opposes the proposal in April; he opposes the sales tax in midwinter, and sponsors it in the spring. Just as the British Labor Government was stampeded into resigning by the British bankers, so, at the very moment when many members of Congress are attacking Wall Street, the Stock Exchange, and the administration of the railroads, they allow themselves to be stampeded into an effort to balance the budget. Every sane member of the House and the Senate knows that this is impossible at the present time; that when it is announced that the budget is balanced it will be merely a fresh swindling of the public. They are told by the financial interests that every possible evil will follow if we do not balance our budget—we shall go off the gold standard, and even before that shall be unable to sell our government securities; our standing in the international money market will be irreparably damaged. Congress swallows this nonsense because it is frightened to death and knows not what else to do. The air is full of cries of "Haste, make haste," without regard to the errors that may be made through that very haste. Thus, items are being cut from appropriation bills that ought never to be eliminated, while on the other hand nobody lays violent hands upon the army and navy estimates, which ought to be cut to the bone. Everywhere there is confusion of counsel, while at the other end of the capital, as one veteran foreign observer in Washington has just put it, the Administration sits with eyes glued upon the stock ticker, which is taken as the completest index of the prosperity of the country and of the standing of the Administration itself.

Not only is this absence of independent liberal or radical leadership in itself a grave danger, it is a gross injustice to the plain people of America. Whenever one goes into the country and talks to people one finds the most tremendous desire for a new political deal, a new party, new tenets, new doctrines, a new political and economic philosophy. All over the country there are little groups of dissenters organized—here as Farmer-Labor men, there as Independents, and in still other places as Socialists, or Communists. The people are ready for a new deal. They want no further continuation of the existing chaos and headlessness; they want guarantees that there is something stable to be obtained from American life, that there is some hope of the future. As yet they cry out in vain. Each day's delay makes it more likely that when the leader arises he will prove to be a demagogue, perhaps of the Hitler type, rather than a sound radical bent on creating a new political machinery to carry out a new political program, to bring courage and faith back to Congress as well as to the multitudes of honest and hard-working men and women who by the millions are today facing want, destitution, the loss of a lifetime's savings, complete social disaster.

## Knife or Ray?

THE surgery of cancer is, on the whole, a ghastly failure"—thus writes a veteran medical contributor of the London *New Statesman and Nation* in a recent issue. He backs up this sensational statement by quoting from a letter to the *Times*, signed by six medical men of the "highest standing and repute," this sentence: "It must be recognized that in this country a large number of operations are still being done which, in view of the possibilities held out by radiological treatment, are no longer justifiable." "That is the truth," the *New Statesman's* writer comments. The extension of operative measures, he says, making them more radical, "has not met with the expected success, and the limits of such extension have admittedly been reached. The patients continue to die after one or more recurrences, and the immediate fatalities are much more numerous." The record for the Wertheim operation of cancer of the womb he declares to be "most abominable." He rejoices that there is to be an impartial and authoritative inquiry by the British medical profession itself into the whole question of cancer treatment.

That this attack on cancer surgery will arouse deep feeling on this side of the Atlantic is unquestionable. The slogan of our cancer societies has chiefly been "Come early and be operated on," for the laudable purpose of getting patients into the hands of medical men in the early stages. "Lens," the writer from whom we have quoted above, declares that this stressing of early operations has had the reverse effect in England. Human nature being what it is, people shrink from going to a surgeon; to the average person an operation remains something to be dreaded, whereas almost anyone is ready for the radium treatment. Undoubtedly there is much good done by prompt use of the knife when the growths are small, but the rage to operate has gone too far. An inquiry to bring out in authoritative manner the actual results being achieved in various advanced radium institutions will confer a great benefit indeed.

Take, for example, the Röntgen Institute of the City Hospital of Frankfurt-on-the-Main, headed by Professor Hans Hohlfelder. Entirely new and up to date, it is achieving extraordinary results—in two cases known to us, the complete cure of two American women in advanced stages of breast cancer, who had been given up by distinguished American surgeons after operations. Being a scientist and not a quack, Professor Hohlfelder neither advertises his results nor makes any claim in regard to them. He admits that he will not feel certain of the advance he appears to have made until some additional years have elapsed. He obtains his effects by careful study of the individual case and its reaction to radium. It is very difficult to decide, for example, which is the best time-sequence for sittings, and which the best working-dose for a single sitting. Every type of cell and every individual cell reveal quite different properties and reactions; more than that, the ray-sensitivity of the individual cell varies greatly at various periods of its existence. A whole new field for advanced scientific technique lies open for exploration. It will take years to cover it, but it surely gives the best hope today of curing the most terrible scourge of humanity which remains unconquered.

## Politics and "Decency"

IN a recent issue of the *Yale News* an editorial remarked casually: "We guess the best men will stay out of politics—it's just too dirty." Thereupon the *New York Herald Tribune* requested comment on this statement from the editors of a number of the prominent college dailies, and has published the replies in a very interesting symposium. Superficially the points of view expressed seem varied, but it is difficult not to read between the lines of most of even the dissenting opinions an essential agreement with the attitude of Hamlet toward the satirical rogue who declared that old men had most weak hams. "All which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down."

The spokesmen for Swarthmore, Cornell, Dartmouth, Penn State, and the Universities of Rochester, Syracuse, and Michigan protest with more or less of conviction. Indeed, only the editor of the Duke University *Chronicle* says bluntly: "Politics is too 'dirty' for the career of a college graduate, since an almost negligible minority would not absorb the rotten political practices which it would be necessary that they become obsessed with in order to even keep within sight of politics of the day." But most of the others express at best little optimism concerning the task which the decent man would have before him, and not one is naive enough to challenge the assumption that "dirty" is the *mot juste* to be used in characterizing our political life as a whole. The Swarthmore *Phoenix* points to the fact that British politics were rescued from unspeakable corruption by the willingness of decent men to enter political life. But the Penn State *Collegian* remarks cynically that "some of the methods used to get votes by fraternity cliques in many colleges would put the average politician to shame"; and the daily *Princetonian*, while granting that many college men would like to see political life cleaned up, declares that many are "unquestionably discouraged, first by the fact that real advancement seems to entail, except in rare cases, not only endless compromise of idea but also use of dishonest methods in catering to the electorate. Secondly, they feel the futility of trying to achieve fundamental improvement against thoroughly and extensively organized forces which support the existing evils."

Perhaps the most striking feature about the whole incident is the fact that all parties alike make the calm assumption that a decent man in politics would be, in any event, something of a phenomenon. Nor is it possible for us—much as we may deplore the unwillingness of most decent men to go into public life—to deny the justice of the assumption. No college man with ideals about government who does go in for politics should fail to realize that the cards will be stacked against him, and that neither his ideals nor his education will be anything except an obstacle. Mere learning, culture, and good manners are, in themselves, suspect, and that is the ugliest side of our traditional admiration of the rough diamond and the rustic sage. Somehow the emphasis has got shifted to "rough" and "rustic" instead of remaining where it was doubtless originally placed on "diamond" and "sage." In any event, a B.A. is something to be lived down, and a sobriquet like "Alfalfa Bill" a priceless advantage.

# Toward a New Tax Program\*

By EDWIN R. A. SELIGMAN

THE tax problem has, not unexpectedly, leaped into the center of the political stage. This is more or less true in every country today, but the problem has perhaps nowhere else assumed the significance that it has attained in the United States. Everywhere, indeed, the economic depression has had its fiscal repercussions. The falling off of business activities is quickly reflected in government revenues. There is comparatively little to choose in the matter of elasticity among many kinds of taxes. As business recedes, transactions diminish, consumption is cut down, wages and profits fall, and the reduced incomes are soon capitalized into lower selling values. Customs, excises, stamp duties, corporate and individual income taxes—all suffer the same fate. And while the government revenues recede, the pressure for increased expenditures becomes greater. Emergency outlays for unemployment relief and for direct and indirect subsidies are demanded to such a degree as far to outweigh the pressure for any feasible reduction of expenditures by slashing salaries or lopping off unnecessary items. Thus we have the twofold difficulty of a decrease in revenues and an increase in expenditure. The disparity between income and outgo is in periods of depression always greater in the public than in the private economy. The individual, in the face of reduced income, cuts his expenses to the bone; the government, with even the most laudable intentions of economy, is tempted and often compelled to incur a deficit.

This universal difficulty is aggravated by special causes which are peculiar to the United States. In the first place, the adoption of prohibition has meant a renunciation of what was up to that time a leading source of revenue and of what would otherwise be today a simple and effective method of wiping out almost the entire annual deficit. Secondly, the inclusion of the capital-gains provision in the income-tax law, which unduly swelled the receipts in the fat years, has materially depleted the revenues in the lean years by creating the possibility of charging off capital losses to ordinary income. Thirdly, the reciprocal exemption of State and federal wealth and earnings has become a growing menace to the responsiveness of increased yields to higher rates of taxation. Fourthly, the antiquated system of State and local finance, with its emphasis on the general property tax, is bringing into bold relief the inevitable lag between capital and income values, with a resulting pressure on the small landowner. The consequence of these difficulties, virtually none of which is found in other countries, has been the remarkable episode of the past few weeks which has attended the discussion of the sales tax, and which has fanned the flames of class antagonism, culminating in what is virtually a political revolution.

Under the circumstances it is necessary to say a word about immediate conditions before discussing the more general problem of the fiscal future, which is the proper topic of our reflections. The immediate situation is a result of the

deficit, accentuated as it has been by the causes mentioned above. The only way to remove a deficit is to balance the budget, whether national, State, or local. Here two fundamental problems present themselves: How can a budget be balanced; and to what period is the balancing to be applied?

To take up the latter point first, it is clear that we must not be too meticulous in defining the period. A budgetary balance is indeed an absolute necessity. For unless the income and outgo correspond, we incur the hazard of either a deficit or a surplus. The danger of the latter is almost equal to that of the former; we have had in the United States on the whole more difficulties with surplus than with deficit financing. While a budget, however, is annual, a budgetary balance is not necessarily restricted to a single year. The requirements of a balanced budget are substantially met if there is an equilibrium after not too protracted a period.

If the budgetary period to which the concept of equilibrium applies is fairly prolonged, lean years must be balanced off against the fat ones. This implies a surplus during the latter. Such a surplus can be either anticipatory or retroactive. To accumulate a surplus because of a possible future deficit is not easy. With the invincible hopefulness of the taxpayer the pressure will rather be to dissipate a surplus through tax remissions. It might, indeed, be possible to provide against unexpected slumps in the revenue by setting up tax reserves and keeping the rates a little higher than would otherwise be necessary. But the simpler expedient is to make good the deficit when it actually occurs by borrowing, and then to amortize the loan by securing a subsequent increase of revenue. The deficit of the past will have been wiped out by the revenues of the present. The surplus is retroactive instead of anticipatory. It is here that the equilibrium period becomes of importance. In the case of a huge deficit due to a sudden business depression it would seem unwise to make the balancing period too short. For this would require both the undue reduction of outlay and the imposition of heavy taxes at the precise period when further deflation ought to be avoided. On the other hand, to keep on borrowing from year to year without evidence of a resolute willingness to undergo further sacrifice would imperil the very basis of the public credit. It would still further undermine the private credit upon which the resumption of confidence depends.

The principle is illustrated by the crisis through which we are passing. Were this the first year of the deficit it would be questionable whether an attempt should be made to avoid borrowing. But as a matter of fact we are now in the third year of the depression. In the first year the deficit was large—nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars. In the second year it was colossal, amounting to about one-half of the ordinary revenues. In this third year it will be still more alarming. Had we not already increased our debt by several billions, a fresh resort to credit might be expedient. But under the actual circumstances it would be hazardous further to prolong the period of balancing. Even at the best it will

\* The third of a series of articles on various important phases of our economic life, written by authorities in their respective fields. The fourth will appear next week.—EDITOR, *The Nation*.

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he several years before the equilibrium for the entire period will have been reached.

The second problem adverted to above is how the budgetary balance, whether short or long time, is to be attained. It is clear that there are four methods of accomplishing the result, three of them looking to the reduction of expenditures, the fourth to the increase of revenues. What appears to be the simplest method is to reduce expenditures directly. This is something which has not yet been seriously attempted in this country. The obstacles are numerous. Obviously, two of the causes of lavish expenditure are war and waste. Far and away the chief elements of modern expenditure are connected with the aftermath of war and the preparation for war. The final aftermath of war in the shape of interest on the debt, pensions, veteran services, and legion allowances is well-nigh irreducible; the fiscal preparation for war depends for its reduction upon the adoption of disarmament projects for which world sentiment does not appear to be entirely ripe. The net result is the virtually sole reliance upon a drastic cut in public salaries and emoluments—a step which is only beginning to be considered in this country.

The second method of balancing the budget is to reduce expenditures by breaking even in the commercial or primarily business activities of government. The typical examples here are the Post Office in federal finance, and the subways or water supply in municipal finance. Even in years of abundance it is questionable whether the general taxpayer ought to be saddled with the cost of services which inure to the special benefit of the users. In a period of depression it is particularly indefensible not to make such services carry their own load and become self-supporting. Deficit financing or net outlay in the commercial activities of government is something resolutely to be deprecated.

The third method of reducing expenditures is by suspending the sinking-fund requirements of the debt service. To many this appears to be of doubtful expediency because of the almost sacrosanct character which is presumed to attach to sinking funds. But to financiers who regard the substance rather than the form the issue is not doubtful. Provision for setting up a sinking fund when a loan is created is doubtless expedient as evidence of the good intentions of the government and the desire to strengthen public credit. But unless the sinking fund is automatically alimented by the imposition of a new tax for this purpose, the dependence of the compulsory amortization upon the general revenues of government is illusory. When it becomes necessary to reduce a debt by resort to fresh borrowing, the process is a mere bookkeeping device; and if the new loan has to be contracted at a higher rate of interest, it becomes absurd. If, on the other hand, the amortization necessitates an increased tax, we are imposing upon the citizens of a particular year not only an unnecessary but an inequitable burden. Far better is it—as was done in our Civil War debt and as is the custom abroad—to treat the sinking-fund provision as something that can be postponed in emergencies, and to consider the requirements as substantially fulfilled by amortizing more than the average in good years and less or none in bad years. At the present time in the United States this item alone amounts to several hundred million dollars. Under the pending plans there is no attempt to include it in the deficit to be covered.

When all is said, however, the chief reliance of the budget balancers must be upon an increase of taxation. But it is a great mistake to think of emergency taxation by itself. It was a fateful error of the political leaders in the recent flare-up in Congress to state that the raising of the revenue was more important than the manner in which it was to be raised. The problems are of equal, not of disparate, importance, as recent events have shown. It becomes necessary, therefore, to consider emergency revenue in the light of a normal tax system, especially in view of the fact that several years at least must elapse before an entirely normal situation will again have been reached.

Here it is important to keep in mind the various constituents of the tax system. There are in reality three kinds of taxes. While all taxes are ultimately paid by some person, they differ according to the manner of assessment. Taxes may be levied on the person as such, irrespective of any particular thing. The chief personal taxes in addition to the poll tax are the general property tax and the general income tax, where the tax is imposed on the person according to his ability to pay, as indicated by his total wealth measured in terms of either property or income. At the other extreme are impersonal taxes, or taxes on things, assessed on the phenomenon irrespective of the person. Such are the ordinary taxes on commodities or transactions, whether on production, on exchange, or on consumption. In between personal and impersonal taxes are those assessed on persons with reference to some particular things, or on things with reference to some particular persons. Such semi-personal taxes are typified by a business tax or a real-estate tax *in rem*. Personal and semi-personal taxes are generally lumped together as direct taxes, in contrast to the impersonal or indirect taxes. A more modern nomenclature is to contrast taxes on wealth as opposed to taxes on expenditure, with the stressing of the fiscal aspects in the latter and of the social aspects in the former.

In dealing with the general problem three points emerge. The first is that while democratic progress everywhere emphasizes the growing importance of direct taxes or taxes on wealth, no country has ever been able to rely upon them alone. Indirect taxes formed the exclusive source of our normal federal revenue up to a very recent period, and must continue to supply a substantial share in the future. The chief problem here consists in the choice of such taxes. With the growing emphasis put on their social and economic effects, advanced communities have come to prefer certain classes of indirect taxes. Apart from customs duties, which are everywhere utilized for either fiscal or economic reasons, it has come to be recognized that the least indefensible taxes are imposts on tobacco and drinks, where social and fiscal reasons converge to urge their adoption. Our renunciation, for the time being, of the latter class of taxes has created one of the major difficulties of the present situation. At the other extreme are found the most indefensible revenues, such as the general sales tax which has so violently been rejected by Congress. In between lie a variety of excises which possess in a minor degree the merits of the first class and the demerits of the second.

The next point is the need of envisaging our revenue system as a whole. The old-time simple situation, with federal revenues alimented from indirect taxes, and State and local revenues furnished by the general property tax, has dis-

appeared. On the one hand the federal government has had to utilize direct taxes, while the States and localities have not only changed in large measure from personal to semi-personal taxes, but are increasingly compelled to rely upon a different criterion for measuring wealth. The consequence is that federal and State governments are trenching on each other's field. Apart from the constitutional restriction which reserves customs duties to the nation and property taxes to the States, the whole field is open to both. The results are the existing overlapping in income taxes, in business taxes, in death duties, and in excises like the taxes on gasoline, on tobacco, on transactions, and the like. The crying need of the future is a coordination of our revenue system whereby some semblance of order may be introduced into the fast-growing fiscal chaos, and as a result of which due consideration may be paid not only to the total burden on the taxpayer but also to the respective claims of State and federal finance.

The third point in any estimate of our future fiscal system is the difficulty into which we have fallen because of the existence of tax-exempt securities. When the system first developed, it was of little fiscal consequence. But now, with over thirty billion dollars of outstanding tax-exempt securities, the situation is full of menace. Reciprocal tax exemption seems likely to nullify the advantages ascribable to a satisfactory federal income tax or an adequate State bank or corporation tax. Under a system of strictly proportional taxation the tax on such securities might well be deemed prepaid. But in the face of progressive taxation and the impossibility of knowing in advance into which bracket the holdings will fall, the exemption, no longer reflected in the higher market value, becomes a distinct immunity, frustrating to this extent the entire scheme of graduation. The removal of this anomaly is a condition precedent to a successful functioning of a well-considered tax system.

The formulation of a plan to function under what we may hope will be the normal conditions of the next four or five years is therefore not so simple as may appear at first blush. To judge from present indications the total expenditures of the nation through its various governmental agencies will amount to some fourteen or fifteen billion dollars, of which about one-third will be ascribable to the federal government. Of the nine or ten billions spent in the States the chief reliance must continue to be the old general property tax, which is fast changing into a semi-personal tax on real estate. The mounting burden on the landowner, which is in the larger cities partly shifted to the tenant and partly amortized by a slower appreciation of land values, can be in a measure relieved by a resort to other revenues, like a share in the coordinated system of income, business, inheritance, gasoline, and other indirect taxes. This raises the question as to how much can be expected from such a series of coordinated taxes. It is obviously neither necessary nor practicable to attempt exact figures. What is important in framing a program is to show the general trend. Precise estimates depend not only on the rates selected but on the oscillations in economic life.

Using then only very rough and general figures, we may begin with the income tax. The yield of the federal individual income tax has varied from three-quarters to over one and one-quarter billion dollars. If we take the year 1928 as an indication of prosperity coupled with moderate rates, and if we add the State income taxes, it is probable that we

may expect under normal conditions a yield of roughly one and one-half billions from this source. Next, the corporate income tax has yielded between one and one and one-quarter billions. If we add to this the corporation and business taxes in the States, we may again expect, with substantially existing rates, a yield of well-nigh two billions. From a co-ordinated income tax we may therefore anticipate under normal conditions and moderate rates about three and one-half billions. This is, of course, only a very small proportion of the total social income.

With the inheritance tax or death duties we enter a far more controversial field. The yield of the estate tax has been exceedingly low, partly because of loopholes in the law, partly because of the large rebate to the States. It is worthy of note, however, that the net taxable estates have gradually increased to about two and one-half billion dollars. This is a very low figure, due in part to the excessive exemptions. In England, with one-third of the population and a very much smaller total wealth, the net taxable estates are actually greater than with us. In 1931 the British revenue from death duties was over \$400,000,000 as compared with about \$1,600,000,000 from income tax. A much lower maximum rate than in Great Britain would easily yield with us in normal times a revenue of a half-billion dollars. This would mean less than a sixth of the income tax instead of a quarter as in Great Britain. And if the loopholes in our law were stopped up, and the exemption were made generous instead of excessive, the burden on the estates of moderate size would be relatively inconspicuous.

Coming to the other revenues, we could easily count on a half-billion dollars each from customs and tobacco, a billion from gasoline, and a billion from a self-supporting postal service, making a total coordinated revenue of seven billion dollars. If prohibition were abolished and liquor taxes reinstated, there is little doubt that there would be a further yield of about one and one-half billions. The net result would be a coordinated revenue of eight and one-half billion dollars, leaving for the local property tax less than six or seven billions. Inasmuch as the federal government ought to need only about five billions, three and one-half billions would be available for the States, with a resulting substantial reduction of the burden of the local property tax.

If, on the other hand, we persist in deliberately renouncing the easily collectible liquor tax, we shall have to make good the difference by a multiplicity of excises, by a substantial increase of the gasoline tax, or by a rise in the rates of both income and inheritance taxes. The first of these choices may be rejected as undesirable. The choice between the other two will depend largely upon the preference that may be assigned to the relative merits of the benefit and the ability theory in taxation. But there will also remain a consideration of the point at which the advantages of a more equitable distribution of wealth are outweighed by a possible retardation in the process of accumulation. In any event the potential resources of the country are so gigantic that we may face with equanimity a fiscal future which, if informed with intelligence and a prudent regard for the economic and social consequences of taxation, will unite ample revenue with moderate and fairly apportioned burdens. If by good fortune the expenditures of war can be reduced and if a more efficient system of budgetary control can be adopted, the future will be wholly without reason for discouragement.

## Presidential Possibilities

# VIII. Franklin D. Roosevelt—Perched on the Bandwagon\*

By HENRY F. PRINGLE

IT is not precisely a modern vehicle and it lurches a good deal on the road which leads to the Democratic National Convention. But Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose bandwagon is far in the lead, grins a jovial grin and keeps his seat. There are ruts in the road, of course. Prohibition is one of them and Tammany Hall another. Taxation, the tariff, and the League of Nations are treacherous mud puddles which still may bog the wheels. Governor Roosevelt has already worked valiantly in smoothing out the ruts and drying up the puddles, however, and he is not seriously disturbed.

Obviously, he would wear an even wider grin if the number of his fellow-passengers were larger. Alas, Alfred E. Smith is driving a bandwagon of his own. Governor Ritchie of Maryland has Presidential delusions, too, and so had "Alfalfa Bill" Murray of Oklahoma until the North Dakota primaries demonstrated the futility of his dreams. Even now, Governor Murray remains in the race. The friends of Melvin Traylor of Chicago are flooding the mails with literature and with songs pointing out that Traylor was born in Kentucky, a State which rhymes with "lucky." A boom is under way for "Happy Jack" Garner. Newton D. Baker remains a silent menace in tortoise-shell-rimmed glasses, and there are in addition innumerable actual or potential favorite sons. And yet the Governor of New York has reason to feel a warm glow of confidence. He will have, by far, the largest number of delegates when the convention meets.

There can be little doubt, I think, that the Democratic Party has a better chance to win with Roosevelt than with any other candidate. People in the mass do not look behind the scenes in politics, even when an opportunity to do so is given them. Franklin Delano Roosevelt—the name itself is worth a vast number of votes. We talk a good deal about democracy, but we like Presidential candidates with a background, at least, of aristocracy. Roosevelt is a gentleman and the son of a gentleman. He went to Groton and to Harvard. He entered politics "to do good." He has a moderate fortune. Last year, when I was a temporary resident of California, people occasionally asked me to tell them about "your splendid Governor in New York." "It's refreshing," they said, "to know that there is a New York Democrat who is not subservient to Tammany Hall. Al Smith was a good man, too, but his affiliations with the most corrupt political organization on earth disqualified him for the Presidency."

Polite skepticism greeted my suggestion that Governor Roosevelt had been, in recent years, more subservient to Tammany Hall than had former Governor Smith between 1924 and 1928. I reminded my friends of the tolerant atti-

tude revealed by Roosevelt at the time of the first exposure of corruption in 1930 and of the fact that his investigations into the scandals were not very vigorous. But this made no difference. The Californians persisted in their conviction that Roosevelt was guiltless of Tammany leanings. It is not only a reputation for evil which lasts through life; the reputation for virtue also lingers. Franklin Roosevelt joined the independents in 1911, just after he entered politics, and was a leader of the group which defeated William F. Sheehan, the Tammany candidate for United States Senator. His legislative career was, I think, almost barren of other distinction and he was virtually unheard of until he became Assistant Secretary of the Navy in the Administration of Woodrow Wilson. By his revolt in 1911 Roosevelt was classified as a young man of great independence and courage.

There are several examples of this in political history. Governor Roosevelt's distant cousin, the late Theodore Roosevelt, was repeatedly saluted as a statesman who had never surrendered his independence. This was partly, although not wholly, because he, too, began his career by giving the rebel yell. As a member of the New York legislature from 1882 to 1884, Theodore Roosevelt indulged in occasional combat with the G. O. P. machine. He exposed some wrongdoing and voted for a measure or two desired by Governor Grover Cleveland. He compromised with the organization in 1884, however, and worked for the election of the dubious James G. Blaine. It was thus throughout Theodore Roosevelt's public career. He bowed to political influence in obtaining appointment to public office, in dealing with the tariff and trust control, and even in the Bull Moose campaign in 1912. But the reputation for sterling independence which began in his legislative days survived. Unlucky Al Smith, on the other hand, was subservient to Tammany in his apprenticeship and defiant only when power had come to him. The evil that he did lived after his reform.

The moral for the youthful politician, obviously, is to be independent in the early days, but not too much so, for that may mean the abrupt snuffing out of political dreams. A gesture or two will suffice, assuming the newspapers have been notified. "To accomplish almost anything worth while," wrote Franklin Roosevelt for the current issue of the *American Magazine*, "it is necessary to compromise between the ideal and the practical. . . . But these compromises must never condone dishonesty, extravagance, or inefficiency. Politics is a series of decisions; they must be made for the long-range benefit of the public." I wonder whether Al Smith has read the article in which this appeared. I wonder whether he muttered "Boloney!" as he did so. If a word or two is changed, the quotation becomes much less ridiculous. Suppose Governor Roosevelt had written: "To accomplish almost any *Presidential nomination* it is necessary

\* The last of our series of articles on leading Presidential candidates.—*EDITOR THE NATION.*

to compromise between the ideal and the practical. . . . But these compromises should not, if it can be avoided, condone dishonesty, extravagance, or inefficiency."

Governor Roosevelt would not have been human had he turned his back on the prospects for the Democratic nomination. His public renown has increased amazingly in the last twelve years. I remember, as a young newspaperman in New York, being assigned to cover portions of his campaign for Vice-President in 1920. That year was among the most hopeless in all the hopeless annals of the Democratic Party. Woodrow Wilson was watching his aspirations crumble into dust and was nursing his rage against those who had killed his League of Nations. The undistinguished nominee for President was Jimmy Cox of Ohio, and Roosevelt had been placed on the ticket to give it some distinction. My assignment was limited to New York; the Vice-Presidential candidate, with a small group of bored newspapermen, traveled from political club to political club and met profound apathy wherever he went. I cannot recall whether Franklin Roosevelt said anything worth saying or whether anyone listened. I do remember that he had a pleasing personality, that he was only thirty-eight years old, that he had a magnificently strong physique. He seemed to be an excellent type for a Vice-Presidential candidate; he had no discernible enemies and was perfectly contented in his obscure role.

Franklin Roosevelt was little in the public eye for a year or so after that. Those who had watched him in the 1920 campaign heard with pity and sorrow of the infantile-paralysis attack. We were gratified when word circulated that he was making a gallant fight against infirmity. Then came the Democratic Convention of 1924 and two of the most impressive speeches in the history of such convocations. One was Newton D. Baker's fervent emotional appeal in behalf of the League of Nations. The other was Franklin D. Roosevelt's speech placing the name of Alfred E. Smith in nomination. It was then that the characterization, "the Happy Warrior," was first applied to the Governor of New York; and Roosevelt, supporting himself on his strong arms as the spotlights beat down upon him, had the absorbed attention of the vast throng in Madison Square Garden. He again thrilled them in 1928, at the convention in Houston.

Politics can also separate old bedfellows. The "Happy Warrior" persuaded Roosevelt to run for Governor in order to help the national ticket in New York. Bitterness came to Al Smith as he watched his own State declare that Herbert Hoover would make the better President. It can hardly have pleased Smith that Roosevelt had developed greater strength in New York than he and had been elected Governor. Their positions were reversed; the star of Franklin Roosevelt was ascending. The next blow was Smith's defeat in the selection of a new leader for Tammany Hall. John F. Curry was chosen against his protests, and Smith's influence faded still more. Then came the stock-market crash, the depression, and the probability that a Democratic nomination for the Presidency would not be so worthless in 1932. The House of Representatives shifted from the control of the G. O. P. to that of the plain people. Roosevelt was re-elected Governor by an enormous majority. He insisted that he was "not a candidate" for the Presidency and was "devoting all my time to the work at hand, administering the affairs of the State of New York." No one was deceived by these words, so familiar in the comic history of politics.

The Governor of New York is, whatever his party, invariably a potential Presidential candidate. This is because he stands in the glare of public attention and because New York is a doubtful State. Nearly every act is interpreted in the light of Presidential yearnings. The administrations of Governor Roosevelt have been, despite this handicap, decidedly superior to those of the average executive. The gentleman in politics so admired by my California friends has exhibited qualities as a politician which have enabled him to force a hostile legislature into accepting the essential parts of his program. Roosevelt's stature has been legitimately increased by his work as Governor of New York. On the power issue, for instance, he was much more successful than Al Smith had been. He called for State power plants and the sale of the resulting electricity to private companies rigidly supervised as to rates. He forced the Republican majority in the legislature to accept this principle for the long-debated St. Lawrence development. On the other hand, the Governor has made it plain that he is a friend of the utility companies to the extent that he proposes no radical changes. He assured them in October, 1930, that the legitimate investor would not be deprived of his legitimate return that the Democratic Party "does not contemplate the State going into the business of selling electricity to the homes." Regarding taxation and relief for the unemployed, Roosevelt displayed courage and leadership which made the efforts of Herbert Hoover stand out for exactly what they were: feeble, cowardly, and vacillating. Governor Roosevelt forced through a 100 per cent increase in the personal-income tax rate. He used the money to provide relief.

What, meanwhile, was the purpose behind the legislative committee created to investigate the city administration in New York? It was political, nothing more. The Republicans at Albany hoped that enough evidence would be uncovered so that Roosevelt would face the dilemma of removing Tammany officials or condoning dishonesty. About dishonesty itself, in city or country affairs, they cared nothing at all. The saintly Republicans made this clear beyond refutation when they declined to authorize a similar investigation for upstate New York cities. Why? Because these upstate cities are, in the main, controlled by their party. All this is no reflection on the sincerity of Judge Seabury nor is it an attempt to gloss over the facts he has uncovered.

On the ground of high and lofty integrity, then, Franklin Roosevelt is to be condemned because he was not hot on the trail when Judge Seabury said that District Attorney Crain was an incompetent official, when magistrates were shown to be crooked, when the parade of little tin boxes began. But it was natural for him to be suspicious of the motives of those who had caused the investigations. Forced into a corner, Roosevelt dismissed Sheriff Farley of New York County but he did so with the utmost gentleness and he permitted Boss Curry to pick another man for the post. His only wrath, indeed, has been directed against the Reverend John Haynes Holmes and Rabbi Wise. They dared to ask that Roosevelt remove Sheriff James A. McQuade of Kings County, the sheriff who explained large bank deposits by pointing to the enormous number of McQuades dependent upon him for bread and butter. Holmes and Wise also requested that the Governor use his influence to bring about the dismissal of John Theofel, Chief Clerk of the Queens County Surrogate's Court. Roosevelt's reply was blistering; he would do

nothing of the sort, he said; the suggestions were grossly impudent. In the early fall of 1930, when the scandals started, the Governor needed Tammany's support for reelection. He now needs the New York delegation's vote at Chicago. And so he does not call upon heaven to smite the wicked ones of the Wigwam.

It is foolish to assume a moral attitude toward this human failing. It is more to Roosevelt's discredit, I think, that he has sought to give the impression that he is not, after all, too ardently opposed to the Eighteenth Amendment. He has his eye upon the Southern delegations. He was finally forced to declare himself again only because of the murmurings in his own State. Roosevelt will, I predict, seek to minimize this issue in the weeks which lie just ahead and will continue to do so in the event that he is nominated. The habit of compromise grows. The intelligent politician gives in, at first, only when the probable result justifies it. After a time he bends his head when there is very little real need for it. Soon he is doing it constantly. Franklin Roosevelt, for example, has not for years been identified with the League of Nations. Newton Baker was carrying the onus of that troublesome issue and he was, in all probability, justified in his public statement that he would not force the United States to join. But on the night of February 1 of this year a letter lay on the Governor's desk at Albany, a letter in which William Randolph Hearst demanded an expression on the League. It is true that Hearst had published the letter in all his newspapers. It is also true, however, that his political influence is waning. If Roosevelt had declined to make a statement, the matter would have been forgotten in short order. On the night after receiving Hearst's letter, however, Roosevelt announced that he did not favor American participation in the League.

The truth is that Franklin Roosevelt hauls down banners under which he has marched in the past and unfurls no new ones to the skies. He was anti-Tammany once. He is so no longer. He was an ardent wet; he would like to forget prohibition today. Will this be so when pressure comes to modify further his views on public utilities? Will he trim still more when members of his party, seeking protective tariffs for rice and sugar and lumber, say that the Smoot-Hawley tariff is not, after all, so wicked as it seemed? His candidacy for the Democratic nomination has strength because he is all things to many sections of the nation. In the East he is wet and not radical. In the West he is progressive. In the South he is not very wet, after all, and is—thank God—a Protestant. These are priceless assets to a candidate for a nomination. They are, perhaps, exactly the reverse if Franklin Roosevelt is to be judged on the basis of his worth as a possible President of the United States. If it is true that a new deal is needed in the world, there is small hope for better things in his candidacy. If it is true that foreign debts must be adjusted downward and reparations forgotten, there is nothing in Roosevelt's philosophy, as far as we know, which gives promise of a better day. He calls for palliatives in world affairs, not cures. His domestic program is hardly more stimulating. This may be the reason why, although Roosevelt wins respect for his ability, his candidacy arouses so little real enthusiasm. I see no evidence whatever that people are turning to him as a leader. They may vote for him—I think they will—because they are sick and tired of Hoover and weary of the depression. But they will do so without the buoyancy of hope. A Hoover, perhaps, by any other name is still a Hoover. But the bandwagon lurches on and Franklin Roosevelt wears his cheerful smile.

## Strains of Harmony

By PAUL Y. ANDERSON

*Washington, April 16*

**O** F all the diplomatic *Punch and Judy* shows held on the international stage in recent years, the one now in progress at Geneva probably takes the cake for sheer hollowness and pretense. Does anyone seriously hope that it will result in the slightest measure of actual disarmament? Nonsense! That possibility has been sunk deeper than Atlantis since the day Premier Laval took his leave at the White House. During the pantomime thus far enacted the most comical gesture was provided by the American delegation in its suggestion to limit the use of *offensive* as distinguished from *defensive* weapons. Acceptance of the proposal would contribute much to the gaiety of a world turned melancholy. Fancy, for example, an international commission of experts solemnly determining at what stage of whetting a bayonet ceased to be defensive and became offensive! Or the respective calibers of offensive and defensive cartridges! Or the comparative strength of offensive and defensive poison gases! Nevertheless, let it not be concluded that under all this mummery nothing serious is occurring. Secretary Stimson is occupied with an extremely important mission, although it is concerned with war instead

of peace. His real business is to ascertain, if he can, (1) the probable attitude of France and Great Britain toward the prospective dismemberment of China by Japan; and (2) the probable attitude of those Powers in the event of war between this country and Japan. Belief is strong at the State Department that such a war is inevitable within a few years. A similar belief prevails at the War and Navy departments, and it is coupled with a fervent desire for more time in which to prepare for it. It is not impossible that we shall experience the crowning irony of watching Bolshevik Russia holding the Japs back until we are ready. Therefore logic would indicate that our first step toward preparedness would be the restoration of formal and friendly relations with our prospective allies.

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**A**LL seasoned political reporters know better than to attend a Democratic "harmony" feast without shin guards and shoulder pads, and the wisdom of such precautions was beautifully illustrated at the Jefferson Day banquet here. The height of this Donnybrook reunion found Al Smith calling Governor Roosevelt a demagogue and a rabble-

rouser, Jim Cox denouncing Democratic Congressmen for refusing to swallow the sales tax, Governor Ritchie demanding prompt payment of foreign debts, and Smith offering to let the debtors take them out in trade after a recess of twenty years. It was the best thing of its kind since the Dempsey-Firpo fight, but the only Democrat who derived any political advantage from it was that one conspicuous by his absence—Roosevelt. Smith succeeded in conveying the sour and definite impression of a man infuriated by his antagonist's refusal to notice him. His intemperate and ungracious attack on his old friend undoubtedly will do more to solidify Western and Southern sentiment behind Roosevelt than any previous development. For that matter, Smith's support would be of doubtful value to Roosevelt. If nominated for President the Governor will almost certainly carry his own State—which, incidentally, is more than Smith did. As far as the rest is concerned, Smith's following is a wet following, and certainly no one doubts that Roosevelt will get the wet vote as against Hoover. Events since the last election evidently have conspired to put Smith completely under Raskob's thumb. He may even find himself a negligible figure at the national convention. That his eclipse is a tragedy does not alter the situation. He would be well advised now to assemble what remains of his dignity and prestige and retire peacefully from the scene. Then, at least, we should be able to love him for what he was.

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THE great battle, transferred from House to Senate, wears on with varying fortunes as leaders of both parties strive desperately to make political capital, and succeed mainly in emphasizing that people dislike to pay taxes—a circumstance which did not go unremarked from Herodotus to James Russell Lowell. Editors who, in January, would not have known a budget from a ten-tube superheterodyne, continue in stentorian tones to demand the balancing of the unbalanced, and to speak of "the national credit" in language which makes up in solemnity what it lacks in meaning. The budget, of course, is always balanced in the sense that the government only spends what it has. The question at issue is whether the government's obligations are to be met entirely out of current revenue. And on that question, despite all the windy "balancing" talk, a profound division still exists. There are men in Congress—cautious men, too—who insist that to ask the country in its present condition to produce a billion dollars in new revenue is like asking a sick man to leap out of bed and carry an anvil up Pike's Peak. Among such remarkably divergent types as the Socialist Norman Thomas and the ultra-conservative Senator George, of Georgia, one encounters the conviction that some borrowing is inevitable. None of the official "balancing" calculations makes any allowance for relief expenditures, although it would take a hardy soul to assert, in the face of accumulating evidence, that such expenditures will not be a desperate necessity within six months. Moreover, most of these calculations count on a saving of about \$200,000,000 a year through "economies." Since most of the proposed "economies" would be achieved by slashing the wages of government workers, they are of doubtful virtue and uncertain prospects. The pressure in their behalf comes from private employers who are eager to have Uncle Sam set a glorious example in wage-cutting.

THE rather dizzying maneuvers of Secretary Mills have not tended to expedite the progress of the tax bill. His latest position, as outlined by himself, is as follows: He prefers the program which he submitted originally to the House Ways and Means Committee—which it rejected; he is willing to take the substitute program drafted by the committee; he does not like the bill as it passed the House, and he is willing to assist the Senate Finance Committee in writing a new bill. I do not care for him in his new character; he would be more effective as his old arrogant, cocksure self. After first denouncing a sales tax and then warmly espousing it, he issued a set of estimates which evoked instant memories of the time when Uncle Andy Mellon underestimated the tax yield for one year by \$900,000,000. Perhaps it was a sense of his predicament which impelled Mills at this juncture to launch into what should be remembered as the classic modern defense of plutocracy. He told the Senate Finance Committee that he was opposed to any taxation that might tend to break up great fortunes or distribute the national wealth more equally. He said it was imperative to keep the "working capital" of the country concentrated in the hands of those whose fathers or grandfathers had known best how to employ and direct it. He declared that a tax rate of more than 25 per cent on inherited wealth (after the first \$10,000,000) would "discourage investment in productive enterprise," and drive money into tax-exempt securities. Of course, this type of shallow, stockbroker economics, by concerning itself solely with finding capital to invest in productive industries and ignoring the necessity of putting enough money in the hands of consumers to purchase the products of industry, was responsible for the depression, and that fact was very promptly pointed out by Dr. John A. Ryan. Unfortunately, Mr. Mills and not Dr. Ryan is Secretary of the Treasury; but Congress remains unterrified, and it is my judgment that the maximum estate tax of 45 per cent will not be lowered and that the maximum surtax rate on income after the first \$5,000,000 a year probably will be increased to 50 per cent. However unsound Mr. Mills deems the procedure, Congress may ultimately be compelled to obtain the needed revenue from the people who have money.

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IT is my disagreeable duty to report that another captain of finance (the third in ten years) has succeeded in making a Senate committee look rather silly. The magnate in this instance is President Whitney of the New York Stock Exchange, and the committee is that on Banking and Currency. To be sure, the committee was not primarily to blame for its innocent and unprepared state. Mr. Whitney was hurriedly summoned on the strength of a telegram from George Barr Baker, former army censor and now President Hoover's New York scout, stating that a terrible bear raid was being hatched. The inscrutable Mr. Whitney knew nothing about the matter, and unhappily for the committee, neither the President nor Senator Walcott, his spokesman, was able to furnish any further basis of information on which the witness might be interrogated. Mr. Whitney agreed cheerfully that there had been too much speculation in stocks up to 1929; he offered the mild suggestion that it might have been stimulated by optimistic statements from Washington. He defended marginal buying and short selling as "steadyng

influences." He had all the explanatory formulas at the tip of his tongue; he knew the precise technique and jargon of his subject; the committee members didn't, and that's all there was to it. But Mr. Whitney is not yet out of the woods. There is a formidable urge within the committee to employ Samuel Untermeyer as counsel. If it prevails, there may be a different story. The hitch lies in the fact that the Administration doesn't want anyone like Untermeyer on the job. It wants to frighten and punish the bears, but Untermeyer might not stop there—he might take out after the bulls—and under this Administration a bull is an animal prized for its rarity. The committee at this writing is split wide open on the issue; but it is plain that nothing will be accomplished unless it gets a lawyer who knows the inside working of the stock market.

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A RECENT decision of the Supreme Court probably means that all Representatives in Congress from Minnesota and Missouri must be elected by the States at large this November, instead of running in their respective districts. In each State the legislature passed a reapportionment bill which was vetoed by the Governor, and the court upheld the veto. The situation in Missouri is interesting because it was a Republican Governor who vetoed the bill, and the outcome probably will be the election of a solid Democratic delegation—largely handpicked by a petty city boss, Tom Pendergast of Kansas City. Minnesota presents the still more interesting possibility of a solid Farmer-Labor delegation. At present there are only two Farmer-Laborites in Congress—Senator Shipstead and Representative Kvale. Yet the popular and powerful Governor Olson is a member of that maverick party and there are many signs which testify eloquently to its strength in the State. One should not be mischievous in these trying times, but I confess I should like to live to see it.

## Traveling with a Band

By ARTHUR WARNER

IT was in the sun-stricken little town of Wellton, Arizona, that I found the One-Man Band sitting in the shadow of a building at a street corner.

The One-Man Band was a little stooped figure, with smooth-shaven face, long white hair, and kindly blue eyes—eyes grown somewhat dim, out of a corner of which a tear would trickle now and then, requiring the services of a large bandana handkerchief to dry.

"I'm eighty-seven years old," the One-Man Band confided to me, and added cheerily, "I'll soon be grown."

There were seven instruments in the One-Man Band. There was a guitar, which the bright little old man twanged with his fingers. A whistle, upon which he tooted from time to time, hung round his neck. Meanwhile, by a dexterous use of both feet, he made music with a drum, a triangle, a pair of cymbals, and two bells. With his own voice the bright little old man supplied the singer soloist.

"Yes," said the One-Man Band, "I spend my time traveling around from place to place. I know all the towns and all the routes. Some people pay as they go. I play as

I go. No, I haven't any family except a sister in Frisco, who's laid up with rheumatism. I'm on my way to Frisco now."

"How long will it take me to get there? Oh, I don't know. I go on bit by bit, but I'll get there. If there's a dollar anywhere, I'll get a piece of it."

The dim blue eyes twinkled merrily and there was a gay laugh, but the gathering of a few stragglers about the corner interrupted the narrative. The guitar went into action, accompanied by the six associate members of the One-Man Band. A poorly clad Mexican woman with a baby in her arms laid down a nickel. Another woman, standing in the rear, pushed forward her little boy. He came up shyly and let slip a coin from a chubby fist. A big man dropped a dime; a shopkeeper strolled over from across the street, listened for a moment, left a contribution, and then went back to his store. Gradually the little group dispersed, and the One-Man Band stopped to dry an errant tear with the big bandana handkerchief.

"Rogers taught me that song," resumed the One-Man Band with a note of pride.

"Will Rogers?" I asked curiously.

Evidently that rival entertainer was unknown to the One-Man Band. With a look of surprise and grief for my ignorance the answer came crushingly, "No, *Jimmy* Rogers, the famous guitar-player."

Then the One-Man Band grew reminiscent.

"I've been in three wars; I've been in three wars in my time. No, I wasn't in the Civil War. I missed that though I am eighty-seven years old and almost grown. But I was in the World War, the Spanish-American War, and the Indian war of seventy-six."

I wanted to ask him what the Indian war of seventy-six was, but felt that I had displayed enough ignorance already in regard to the famous guitar-player, Jimmy Rogers. So, reflecting that the One-Man Band must have reached about the three-quarter-century mark in 1917, I contented myself with inquiring, "What did you do in the World War?"

"Oh, I played around the camps; I did my bit."

The dim blue eyes looked at me kindly but a little tired, and the big bandana handkerchief was pulled out again to wipe the moisture from a perspiring forehead. I brought a cool drink from a nearby stand, and somewhat revived, the One-Man Band returned to its music. There were some preliminary flutters on the strings of the guitar. Then in a voice firm, if a little husky, the soloist began:

All around the water tank,  
Waiting for a train,  
A thousand miles away from home,  
Sleeping in the rain.

The soloist paused an instant, swept the group with a smile, and resumed:

I walked up to a brakeman,  
Give him a line of talk;  
He says, "If you've got money, boy,  
I'll see that you don't walk."

The words stopped but the seven pieces of the One-Man Band twanged and clanged on as the soloist leaned back and broke into a riotous yodel—he called it a "yodel"—which concluded with a gay shout, after which the voice went on with the ballad:

"My pocket-book is empty,  
Not a penny can I show."  
He says, "Get off, get off, you railroad bum,"  
So he locked the box-car door.

He put me off in Texas,  
A State I dearly love;  
Wide open spaces all around,  
Moon and stars above.

There was another "yodel," a little less abandoned, a little more wistful, and then the conclusion:

My pocket-book is empty,  
My heart is filled with pain;  
A thousand miles away from home,  
Waiting for a train.

The patch of shade from the friendly building had been narrowing as the sun swung into the south, and now the wilting rays fell full on the uncovered head of the One-Man Band. The listeners in the little group drifted away and no others gathered to take their places. Up and down its meager length Wellton's main street seemed practically deserted. The One-Man Band scanned it for a second and then turned a doubtful glance on the collection of coins, neither considerable in number nor impressive in denomination. A little of the gay insouciance of the early morning had disappeared; there was a shade of weariness in its place.

"The stage will be here in about an hour," I said, glancing at my watch, "and you are going along to Yuma in it with me."

"Yes?" queried the One-Man Band, brightening.

"Yes," I returned. "I never traveled with a band before in my life, and probably never shall have a chance to do so again. Yuma may not have any music at the station to welcome me, but I'll have some there to greet it. I'll roll my own. Come into the restaurant and let's have something to eat while we're waiting for the stage."

## In the Driftway

**A**N interesting experiment in good government has been going on of late under the Drifter's very eye, and he has been so amused and even touched by the result that he wishes to pass it on. Near where he lives is a rather large community garden with a shallow wading pool and a very dilapidated frame house just outside the garden limits. Overlooking the garden is a row of tenements, the first of a row in a "tough" neighborhood; the tenements, naturally, are full of kids—just tenement kids. Their playground has always been the street; until fairly late at night—very late in summer—the air has been full of the sound of them and wrung doorbells and broken windows have testified to their energy. Last summer the tenants of the community garden tried a little experiment. Before that they had tried other experiments, all with the same object and all unsuccessful, to keep the tenement kids from swarming all over garden beds, from throwing unpleasant objects in the pool, and from generally making a nuisance of themselves. But the last experiment succeeded: it was to form the tenement kids into a club, and to allow the club the use of the garden and the pool for a stipulated time each day.

**T**HE result was magic. The garden remained neat, and woe to the rash child who attempted to litter it; where formerly gangs from other parts of the city had, at the invitation of the neighborhood kids, stormed the ramparts, the newly created club members now dealt hardly with an interloper. It had become their garden, and they were going to defend it at all possible odds! A little while later they adopted the ancient, tumble-down corner house. Two floors became the clubhouse; they obtained from somewhere—by honest means, one may only hope—whitewash to "fix up" the dingy walls, and bits of wood to make "furniture" with. Much of the time formerly spent in deviling the neighbors is now spent in the clubhouse. And they are as civic-minded about it as they were about the pool. The moral is perhaps simple; the means are a little more complicated. It was not spontaneous group activity that brought all this about, but the endeavors of an already well-organized group, Pioneer Youth. This organization, besides a good deal of interesting work in education, has done much to offer camping opportunities and direct relief in the form of toys as well as food and clothing to the children of workers. But this experiment with tenement kids, which is only one of a number of similar attempts in other crowded districts, seems somehow more immediately touching. Pioneer Youth is asking for money to help make more "clubhouses," more play schools and camps. One hardly sees why they should not get it.

THE DRIFTER

## Correspondence

### Cavalry and Generals

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In a recent issue of *The Nation* you said that we had ninety colonels of cavalry to command six regiments of horse. The actual number in October last was sixty-six, and the number of cavalry regiments fifteen. I assume you are aware that the extra colonels of cavalry, some forty-five, are on detached duty. I must further disagree with your opinion that there are to be no more cavalry regiments, and that the War Department is steadily motorizing the cavalry arm. You have perhaps been misled by the newspaper reports of the mechanization of regiments of cavalry and interpreted it to mean motorization of the regiments instead of their trains. General MacArthur's latest report contradicts the theory that the department is abolishing all cavalry regiments.

I do not understand your point as to the four generals in Panama. Why should they not be there if there are appropriate commands for them? As it is, one major general commands the Panama Canal Department, another the division of troops stationed there, while two brigadier generals command, respectively, the coast-artillery regiments and the infantry brigade. I emphatically disagree with your statement that the Reserve Officers' Training Corps is worthless from a military point of view. At least it is our great source of reserve officers. During the last fiscal year no fewer than 5,989 new reserve officers were appointed on graduating from the R. O. T. C. Finally, by a slip of the pen, you speak of the Subcommittee of the House Military Affairs Committee, headed by Congressman Collins of Mississippi, when you should have written House Appropriations Committee.

New York, March 25

GEORGE FIELDING ELLIOTT

[It is still our understanding that only six of the fifteen regiments of cavalry (of whose existence we were well aware) are now actually mounted. The fact that the extra colonels are on detached duty we were also well aware of. The actual number today does not affect our point that these surplus colonels are unnecessary, and that there are so many of them that probably some of them are retired before they actually command a mounted regiment. Of course the War Department finds work for them. If it were given 2,000 more officers tomorrow it would still find some duty for them to perform; but that does not mean that it would be worth-while, active military duty. We are also still of the opinion that if rigid retrenchment in army expenses is undertaken it will be quite possible to eliminate two of the present generals at Panama.—**EDITOR THE NATION.**]

## Modern Education

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Anyone who studied at an American university of standing in the last twenty years heard a good deal about a new technique of education, popularly known as "experimental," which stressed the importance of group activity in contact with real life. Now if this phrase describes anything, it describes the recent trip of students under the auspices of the National Student League to study conditions in the Kentucky coal fields. Their ejection by a lawless mob was an act which should have aroused protest from all who have sponsored modern education and student participation in public life.

As a matter of fact, university authorities did little to help the students. Officials of one university so far betrayed their own preachings as effectively to deliver their students into the hands of the Bell County mob by informing "I'm-the-law" Smith, attorney of the county, that those students did not represent their institution "officially." Since their return the students have been criticized by some university authorities and some old grads.

A group of twenty alumni, after considering these facts, have organized the National Alumni Association to support and defend the students who went to Kentucky, to protest the treatment accorded them, and to urge a federal investigation into the conditions which the Bell County mob was trying to hide from the students. We hope in this way to discourage those who are trying to discourage students from giving vital content to the academic theories their teachers have expounded. The organization already has almost two hundred members and an executive committee including John Dewey, Waldo Frank, and Morris R. Cohen. Any alumnus of an American university who desires to support us should communicate with the undersigned at 416 West 122d Street, New York City.

New York, April 6

HERBERT SOLOW

## Tax Land Values

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: A staunch supporter of *The Nation* wishes to express disappointment that the admirable Four-Year Presidential Plan for 1932-36, inclosed as a supplement in the issue of February 17, lacks a fundamental point—a suggestion, at least, of taxation of land values. The value of such a tax being self-evident to the unprejudiced, I urge that in your coming articles on the present depression some space be given to this side of the taxation question.

Worcester, Mass., March 31

MARY L. HASTINGS

## Finance

### Automobiles to the Rescue

WETHER the "sales drive" of the automobile manufacturers will serve to rouse business from its lethargy and set a general revival on foot is one of the big questions of the moment in Wall Street. Ford has introduced his new eight-cylinder models, General Motors has presented a great series of exhibits in fifty-five cities, and the Chrysler organization, which is steadily rising in importance in the motor world, has made its bid for patronage. Prices have been reduced, in recognition of the present state of the public purse, but not to the same extent as prices in general. Mass production is the secret of low automobile prices, and with current output at a low ebb there has not been much opportunity for cost cutting in that direction.

Results to date carry no positive assurance of success, but it is too soon to admit failure. No one could have expected an instantaneous rush of buyers, and at best the volume of sales must appear meager in comparison with the sales of boom years such as 1928 and 1929. Enormous crowds have thronged the show rooms, but low purchasing power and the question of the trade-in allowance on the old car have apparently kept actual orders within modest bounds.

This selection of the automobile business as the bellwether which might lead the way out of depression is full of interest to the thoughtful observer of American business. Automobiles represent one of the few commodities of which it is possible to demonstrate that a shortage exists, if we accept certain standards of what a car ought to be. At the end of 1931 there were about 22,500,000 passenger cars registered in the United States. To make up this total, we must add together the output of new cars for all the years from 1931 back to and including 1925. That means that there are now on the roads a considerable number of machines which have seen their best days. Statistically, therefore, a great replacement demand for automobiles exists.

Will it prove to be an effective demand? The answer will depend in large measure upon the public's capacity to buy. It will not do to say that the automobile has determined our way of living to a tremendous extent, and that therefore we cannot do without it. Workmen may find it worth while to go back to the bicycle; low-paid white-collar employees may discover, as their English counterparts have discovered, that the "motor-bike" can provide a thrill and that it carries double; and others who have driven their own machines to work can find a substitute in the bus.

It is, however, premature to assume that the automobile trade, which has been characterized by phenomenal inventive genius and an unquestioned ability to meet the public's demands in prosperous times, will necessarily play a diminishing role, now that times have changed. The industry is still thinking in terms of luxury, swank, and ever-increasing mechanical excellence. Suppose, having concluded that the era which responded to such appeals has closed, it reasoned that it could still sell more cars than it could produce if, say, the price could be cut to \$100. An impossible figure, to be sure; yet somewhere between that price and present prices may lie the point of maximum returns. The car which can meet such requirements will be a lean and stripped affair, without the innumerable gadgets which the public would like to have but cannot afford. What motor manufacturer will be the first to offer utility, and nothing more, at the lowest price on record?

S. PALMER HARMAN

# Books, Drama, Films

## Blue-Stemmed Grass

By THOMAS HORNSBY FERRIL

There's blue-stemmed grass as far as I can see,  
But when I take the blue-stemmed grass in hand,  
And pull the grass apart, and speak the word  
For every part, I do not understand  
More than I understood of grass before.  
"This part," I say, "is the straight untwisted awn,"  
And "Here's the fourth glume of the sessile spike,"  
And then I laugh out loud at what I've done.

I speak with reason to the blue-stemmed grass:  
"This grass moves up through meadow beasts to men."  
I weigh mechanical economies  
Of meadow into flesh and back again.  
I let the morning sun shine through my hand,  
I trace the substance bloom and beast have given,  
But I ask if phosphorus or nitrogen  
Can make air through my lips mean hell or heaven.

All that the grass can make for any beast  
Is here within my luminous hand of bone  
And flesh and blood against the morning sun;  
But I must listen alone, and you, alone,  
Far children to be woven from green looms;  
We move forever across meadows blowing,  
But like no beast, we choke and cannot cry  
When the grasses come, and when the grass is going.

## Gamaliel Bradford

**I**N the death of Gamaliel Bradford at the age of sixty-eight, American letters has lost a distinguished figure. What distinguished him was less brilliance than simple competence. His career seems a proof that even in literature it is possible to build an impressive reputation on the copy-book virtues of industry, patience, persistence, careful and conscientious workmanship. Bradford himself was the most modest of men, and would probably agree with this judgment. The two-page autobiography that he contributed two years ago to a book called "Modern Writers at Work" (edited by Josephine K. Piercy; Macmillan's) contained these interesting paragraphs:

I began to make a business of writing forty years ago and as I look back, it seems as if I had met failure after failure and for a long time nothing else. I began with poetry and it took me years to learn that in practically every case poetry as a means of material success and livelihood is quite hopeless. Then I turned to fiction and I have today eight novels, three of which have been published, with only moderate success, while the other five are waiting peacefully in manuscript for their turn to astonish the world. I believe in them, but apparently no one else does.

And for nearly forty years I have been writing plays, and I have the manuscripts of some fifteen completed, and only one in print, and after the most desperate and pro-

longed efforts I have never been able to get a single one on to the stage.

Then twenty years ago, after a long period of utter discouragement and as it seemed final abandonment of literary labor altogether, I literally stumbled into the line of biographical work and made a success which, if in no way remarkable, has been more of an astonishment to me than anyone else. I should prefer to write great novels; but we do what we can, not what we should like.

I have gone into this perhaps rather egotistical disquisition to support my point that a tremendous and undying persistence is at least a very important part of the writer's equipment. I don't know that I have much else to boast of, but I think I have that.

It would be unfair, of course, to accept Bradford's work at the low valuation that he himself sometimes seemed to set upon it. It requires more than industry and infinite pains, it requires undoubted talents to write as smoothly and pleasantly as he did, to master the art of selection, and to marshal one's facts in so finished a fashion. But one did not find in Bradford's work any brilliant flashes of insight; he never gave us any strikingly fresh and original interpretations of historic or literary characters. It was amazing, indeed, that otherwise discerning critics should so often have placed him on a level with Lytton Strachey. He had none of the latter's penetration, aloof irony, quiet but devastating wit, and inimitable flavor. On the other hand, he was perhaps a safer model for the young biographer. For he seldom, like Strachey, yielded to the temptation to *impose* an interpretation on a character; his work was always distinguished for its judiciousness and balance; his interpretations, within their limits, could be trusted. He was often credited with inventing the biographical genre which he practiced, but he never made such claims himself. What he did was to invent the word "psychography" to describe it; the genre had long ago reached full flower in Sainte-Beuve. Sainte-Beuve, indeed, was frankly Bradford's own model, and it would be impossible to imagine one more suited to his talents. From the great French critic he learned the virtues of an unfailing catholicity of mind, of a patient view of the subjects of his portraits from all sides, and of a refusal to arrive at a judgment until all the evidence was in.

HENRY HAZLITT

## Mental Healers

*Mental Healers.* By Stefan Zweig. The Viking Press. \$3.50.

**T**HE history of mental healing possesses a human interest out of all proportion to its practical achievements. And it is easy to understand why. It is the only discipline in which mind acts upon nature and gets the thrill of spirit answering spirit. An engineer, a scientist, a physician, no matter how successful he may be in dealing with reality through his mathematico-mechanical methods, experiences something of Pascal's terror at the infinite spaces and the cold, dead objectivity of the material world. In ordinary human intercourse we have consciousness communicating with consciousness, but the whole realm of mind feels itself imprisoned in an alien material world, a world which it may control but which it cannot know or talk to. It is only in mental healing that the mind feels itself akin to the body and penetrates or seeks to penetrate to the creative

spiritual core behind the objectified material world. The very possibility of mental healing has thus a religious significance. Indeed, one can understand not only why all the religions should have preached mental healing, but also why the modern revival of mental healing, against a background of materialistic science, should have resulted in a new religion—Christian Science. Both in their truth and in their superstition the aspirations of religion and mental healing have very much in common.

From the modern history of mental healing Stefan Zweig has selected the three most striking—and most important—chapters. They are represented by the work of Franz Mesmer, Mary Baker Eddy, and Sigmund Freud. A strange company this trio—a physician led astray by occult beliefs and discovering something he himself did not understand, a poverty-stricken woman invalid who cured herself by organizing at the age of sixty a powerful religious sect on the tenets of metaphysical medicine, and finally a great scientific intellect who introduced scientific order into the spiritual realm. But there is a thread of continuity between all three figures, and that thread is Mesmer's initial discovery of "animal magnetism" as a method of healing disease.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, when Mesmer lived, the medieval ideas of occult qualities and mysterious influences were rapidly being abandoned in favor of rational experimental science, which had conquered physics and was just then conquering the realm of chemistry. These ideas survived, however, among the general public and in medical teaching, which did not become modernized until well into the nineteenth century. Mesmer, who wrote a doctoral dissertation on the astrological theme of the influence of the planets, had his attention called to the "curative properties of the magnet" by a Jesuit astronomer who had been asked by a rich lady to prepare a magnet to cure her ailments. As it happened, the symptoms of the lady were actually relieved by magnetic applications, and thereafter Mesmer was set afire with the belief in the curative virtues of the magnet. He made a number of remarkable cures, and his fame became world-wide overnight. He was sufficiently experimental in his technique to come to realize after a while that the cure was not caused by physical magnetism but by the passes which the physician made with the magnet. He was not enough of a genius, however, to realize just what lay behind his method, and he insisted that the cures were caused by a magnetic fluid emanating from the human organism—whence the name "animal magnetism." An obscure French disciple, Puysegur, repeated Mesmer's experiments and gave them something of a modern explanation in terms of suggestion and the various twilight states of hypnotism. But by a strange irony of fate Mesmer's work was condemned by all the learned societies because it was explained in terms of a material fluid, for which there was no experimental evidence, while the psychological explanation was completely ignored. Mesmer's cures were set down as due to the patient's "imagination," but the learned scientists did not think of taking the realm of the imagination seriously.

For a whole century the phenomena that had been discovered by Mesmer were banned from medical science, and it was not until Charcot in 1882 had the courage to insist upon the recognition of hypnotic phenomena as an integral part of scientific medicine that the work of the Austrian physician began to yield scientific fruit in many fields. It was from Charcot's work that Freud developed his science of psychoanalysis.

In the meantime, through various channels, the phenomena of hypnotic cures had been transplanted to America. A Portland watchmaker by the name of Quimby, listening to an itinerant healer, became a convert to and a very successful practitioner of mental healing. The relations of Mary Baker Eddy with Quimby—how she came to him as a last resort when all other methods had failed, how she learned his doctrine and

adapted it with a truly epoch-making success—all these things are too well known to be reviewed here. In the sketch of Mrs. Eddy, which takes up nearly half the volume, the biographical interest in the personality overshadows the reader's interest in the method of mental healing. And as might be expected, Stefan Zweig is even more at home in the delineation of this remarkable personality than in the exposition of scientific doctrine.

The sketch of Freud's doctrine, which forms the third essay, is built up around the idea that psychoanalysis is a technique for producing health by relieving the patient of the burdens and conflicts that he is carrying within his unconscious. This view, which subordinates the content of Freud's theories of the unconscious to his fundamental method, is at once the simplest approach to Freud and also the soundest. It is easy to pick a quarrel with Freud on the moral and metaphysical ramifications of his theories, and in an exhaustive philosophic criticism of his doctrine it would be necessary to do so. But in a short and synoptic evaluation of the historic contribution of psychoanalysis, it is best to isolate the essential and forget the problems of detail. Zweig has done this very admirably.

The book as a whole is a fine piece of scientific and biographical exposition, forceful and dramatic in its style, accurate in its subject matter. It does not claim to be a complete history of mental healing, but it gives the general reader a fascinating introduction into the most provocative of modern sciences.

BENJAMIN GINZBURG

## A New Talent

*Midsummer Night Madness.* By Sean O'Faolain. The Viking Press. \$2.50.

SEAN O'FAOLAIN establishes himself in this his first collection of short stories as easily one of the half-dozen most accomplished artists in the genre who have appeared in our time. The comparison is with "Dubliners," or Mary Butts's "Speed the Plough," or the earlier stories of Katherine Mansfield. And yet so strong is the impression of unrealized fertilities of language and imagination left by this book that one is convinced Mr. O'Faolain will do even better work when he turns to the richer scale and larger discipline of the novel form.

The period covered is that interlude of hushed terror in Irish life which followed the last visitations of the Black and Tans and the establishment of the Free State. The background is the lonely hills and valleys of the Irish countryside, whose peculiar quality of mournful beauty has never before been rendered with such unsentimental concreteness. In the contrast between the dead weight of ancient political antagonisms and the living beauty of the land and the people in it struggling to be born, Mr. O'Faolain has found his theme—a theme which remains fairly uniform throughout all these stories. The boy in *Fugue* is perhaps most representative of all these revolution-weary members of Ireland's own "lost generation." "On the run" in a wild mountain region, cold and tired and with only the dimmest notion of his reasons for such a harsh mode of existence, he is given food and shelter by a lonely mountain woman. Returning later to claim the promise of peace and happiness which she offers, he is warned by a neighbor that his companion has just been killed, and that he must flee at once for his life. Afterwards the memory of the light in the woman's cabin tortures him "as the memory of cool winds must torture the damned in hell." "Yet everywhere they slept abed, my dark woman curling her warm body beneath the bedclothes, the warmer for the wet fall without, thinking if she turned and heard the dripping eaves—that the winter was at last come." So also in *The Small Lady* the incorruptible young Republican is seduced by his prisoner, an enemy spy, without knowing

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that it is his youth which has rebelled against the rigors and privations of his trade. The two young people in *The Bomb Shop* emerge into the sunlight, leaving behind the smell of nitrate and the old woman whose eyes are "big with death. In the last story the theme is completely resolved: love is triumphant over the fierce asceticism of the patriot in one young man's heart.

The narrative power of these stories derives from the almost intolerable tension produced by the overhanging terror in which the characters make their movements. *The Bomb Shop* is among other things a psychological study of the effects on a group of normal young people of being shut in with the actuality of death. In *The Small Lady* Mr. O'Faolain need only have developed more fully the possibilities of his situation—that of a pampered woman of fashion awaiting death at the hands of a band of men whom she has betrayed—to have written a full-length novel of great power.

Mr. O'Faolain, who is a student of the ancient Gaelic literature, has made an exquisite fusion of its rhythms and imagery with those of modern peasant speech in forming his style. Yet he manages to accomplish this without the effect of literary artificiality which mars the best passages of Synge and without the strained naivete of Lady Gregory. The result is a fully assimilated narrative style, hardly surpassed by any of the younger writers in the language.

WILLIAM TROY

### Books in Brief

*Naked Faqir.* By Robert Bernays. Henry Holt and Company. \$3.

This is a most readable comment on the Indian political situation, but by no means a thorough or even discussion. The "Naked Faqir" is, of course, Gandhi, and the time is the first five months of 1931, when the Irwin-Gandhi truce was negotiated so that the Indian National Congress might be able to send a representative to the late unsuccessful Second Round Table Conference in London. The author is an Englishman of liberal persuasion; that is, he believes in British imperialism in India provided it accepts an inevitable soft-pedaling. He seems somewhat regretful at the spectacle of the decline of British power there, and he gives no evidence of satisfaction that India is showing the strength to claim home rule. His opinions are drawn from contacts with British officials from the Viceroy down, whom he met socially as well as journalistically. Indians he met only at the demand of his journalistic duty, and he views them without sympathy. The book is a good piece of journalism but poor political criticism, dashed with plenty of Anglo-Indian gossip, never dull, and to be read as entertainment rather than authority.

*The Thief.* By Leonid Leonov. Authorized Translation by Hubert Butler. The Dial Press. \$3.

This well-known novel of the early post-revolutionary period in Soviet Russia is in the old tradition from Dostoevski through Gorki, both in its manner and in its philosophy. It deals with the underworld of Moscow during the early chaotic years of the new regime. Formerly a brave soldier in the revolutionary army, Mitka, the thief, has sunk to the lowest depths. Mitka's career, in a symbolical sense, parallels the course of Russian revolutionary history. The novel ends on a note of regeneration when Mitka, purged through suffering and having touched bottom, takes his place as a worker in the new social order as "the sun rises over Russia." "The Thief" is a long, chaotic but powerful book, one of the important novels to come out of Soviet Russia.

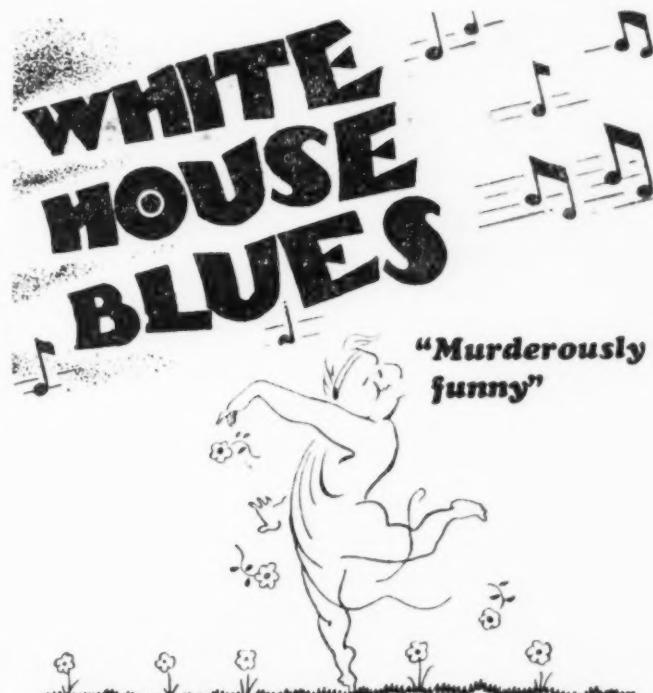
## Drama

## The Truth About Milne

R. A. A. MILNE'S "The Truth About Blayds" has stood the test of time a good deal better than its author has managed to do. Revived at the Belasco after a ten-year interval, it is quite as amusing as it ever was, and it serves to remind us of what Mr. Milne was capable of before he began to succumb to hypocorism, or Barrie's Disease. Doubtless even at this early date signs of incipient whimsicality were evident, but they were pleasant enough because they were not yet evidently pathological, and they counted for no more than tuberculosis did in Keats's early poems or madness in Maupassant's middle period. It is best to forget that Mr. Milne has since suffered from an apparently hopeless regression to that infantile level which some few perverted people find charming; and if one can forget that, then "The Truth About Blayds" is a gentle, diverting comedy, pervaded by a kind of intelligence rare enough in the theater. No one in it talks baby talk; no one wishes that he were a child again. And that, to me at least, is a great comfort, since I can never see a play by either Barrie or the later Milne without remembering a photograph reproduced in Dr. Kempf's "Psychopathology." It shows a patient so thoroughly Peter-Panish in her refusal to grow up that she has suspended herself in an improvised hammock and lies quite comfortably in an authentic pre-natal position.

Probably no one who saw "Blayds" before has forgotten the ingenious anecdote which serves as its plot. Oliver Blayds, last of the great Victorian poets, has reached his ninetieth birthday, and by so doing has reduced all his children, grandchildren, and his in-laws as well to the status of mere guardians of the famous Blayds shrine. They have given up any personalities they may ever have had, and they have done it willingly, out of respect to his genius. Blayds the grandfather may not seem identical with Blayds the poet, but they feel that he is, until, almost with his dying breath, he confesses the great secret. All the poems—with the exception of that unfortunate lapse, the 1863 volume—were written by someone else, by the boyhood friend named Jenkins, who died in youth and left the great corpus of his work in care of a man who lusted chiefly for fame. What now is to become of one daughter's wasted life, and what is to become, not only of the official biography, but also of such subsidiary studies as "On the Track of Blayds in the Cotswolds," which the son-in-law was planning to write? What, indeed, until rationalization begins to do its beneficent work? The nonagenarian must have suffered a "hallucination"—a comfortably polysyllabic word. What he really meant—if he meant anything at all—must have been that only the 1863 volume was not his. Surely the man who wrote those beautiful lines in "The Ode to Truth" could not have founded his life on a lie. And to try to remember that perhaps he did not write them after all, is really too complicated. That way madness lies. We have the books and his name is on them.

The anecdote is extraordinarily ingenious, and it has even a kind of metaphysical implication. A man of ninety is no more closely related to the poems he wrote sixty years before than he is to a friend of his youth. Blayds is not Jenkins; but neither, at that age, would Jenkins be Jenkins, and the boy we remember as ourselves is, after all, only someone we remember. It is true, however, that even the most ingenious anecdote does not necessarily make a good play. In fact, it very rarely does, for the very reason that a story whose point can be revealed in anecdotal form is seldom substantial enough to last the three acts out. And yet in Mr. Milne's play it actually does so in



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quite a satisfactory fashion. Suavely written and suavely played, it has a distinct flavor of its own, and must be set down as one of the very few comedies about literature which are really amusing.

With the exception of O. P. Heggie as Blaids, no member of the present cast is the same as that which first performed the piece in New York, but they are all at least good, even though that superb comedian Ernest Lawford does not quite make me forget the ineffably fussy son-in-law created in the original version by Ferdinand Gottschalk. Effie Shannon is perfect as the sillier of the two daughters, and so, too, is Pauline Lord, who adds the correct touch of pathos to the portrait of the other daughter who gave up her lover to be near the "great" man when he needed her. Indeed, I am sorely tempted to refresh my memory by a surreptitious glance at Mr. Burns Mantle's invaluable "Best Plays of 1921-22" and to launch into a discourse upon the respective merits of the two productions. It is also seldom that a dramatic critic today has an opportunity to indulge in this sort of display, and I should, besides, welcome an opportunity to salve the sting left behind when Mr. J. Ranken Towse once shook his finger in my face and declaimed: "Young man! No one under sixty has ever seen a real actor." But I am restrained by the equally vivid memory of a remark committed to print by Max Beerbohm. "Theatrical reminiscence," he said truly, "is the most terrible weapon in the armory of age."

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

## Films

### "Grand Hotel"

**H**OELS, like railroad stations, provide a backdrop of the world's indifference against which individual human action, selected and brought close, seems particularly vivid. The overtone of departures and arrivals which pervades the setting heightens ironies; life itself seems more important, contained as it is for the spectator between yesterday's arrival and tomorrow's departure. As a dramatic device, a hotel background offers advantages for characterization and action that must be irresistible to a playwright: there can be any number of leading characters; there may be half a dozen plots, unrelated except as their principals impinge upon one another in the

casualness of a hotel lobby. But there are also dangers: the loss of essential unity, and a lack of proportion between the various characters and plots. Finally, it is obvious that such a play must content itself with being merely good theater.

In "Grand Hotel" Vicki Baum has seized upon all the advantages and avoided most of the dangers (though unfortunately she is not able to abstain from philosophic comment). By having the baron play an important, though different, part in each of the narratives, she creates a central focus for the kaleidoscopic scenes. On the other hand, the presence of the unhappy exiled Russian dancer, remote and uninvolved except with the central figure, the baron, lends the play an exciting air of mystery and fatality.

Or perhaps it is only because the part of the unhappy Russian dancer is played by Miss Greta Garbo in the film version of "Grand Hotel" (Astor Theater). The essential appeal of Miss Garbo's acting, it seems to me, lies in her ability to be at the same time innocent and world-weary. Her present role is particularly suited to her—she portrays with fine conviction the disciplined innocence one associates with the cloistered dancers of the imperial Russian ballet, and the loneliness of a temperamental Russian for whom no Russia now exists; her tall and elegant dignity, as she walks through the hotel lobby, contrasts affectingly with the seemingly slight and fragile figure of despair or radiance beyond the doors of her apartment. Her first scenes are somewhat overplayed; from then on she displays a fine capacity for variety of mood and for an understanding portrayal of delicate and subtle shades of feeling. The rest of the cast, which consists entirely of stars, is surprisingly well chosen. To this unsympathetic observer John Barrymore, as the baron with whom Grusinskaya falls in love, is hardly satisfying, but his playing is less arrogant, more restrained, and therefore much more convincing than usual.

Lionel Barrymore, as the poor clerk, gives a moving interpretation, but it would be more forceful if it were handled at less length. Joan Crawford is excellent as the accommodating and realistic stenographer. Wallace Beery, who plays the industrial magnate, is not able to overcome the confusion of the part itself, which begins by being almost burlesque relief and becomes realistic and tragic.

The play moves smoothly through its constantly shifting scenes; and though the action is laid entirely in the hotel, monotony is avoided largely because the camera is able to capture, as no other medium can, the great variety of light, sound, and setting in a cosmopolitan hotel.

MARGARET MARSHALL

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